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Alaska Air National Guardsmen show readiness to deploy worldwide

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The 176th Wing, one of the nation's largest and busiest Air National Guard wings, today kicked off its participation in Polar Force 19, a base-wide exercise designed to test mission readiness.

"Deploying a military force is a complex operation — many moving parts have to come together seamlessly at the same time," said Brig. Gen. Darrin Slaten, the 176th Wing's commander. "That's why these types of exercises are so valuable: They help ensure that the Alaska Air National Guard can deploy, on very short notice, a powerful force capable of delivering overwhelming combat power in support of U.S. interests anywhere in the Pacific theater."

The wing will implement Polar Force in two phases.

During Phase 1, the wing practices preparing and deploying its members to a simulated hostile environment. The "deployers" assemble their gear and are run through a series of checks and briefings to prepare them for their upcoming assignments. Their equipment is bundled on pallets and loaded on planes, providing practice for loadmasters and aircrew.

In Phase 2, the wing tests its ability to operate and execute missions within a hostile deployed environment. Wearing helmets, chemical-protection suits and other combat gear, the wing's men and women evaluate their own ability to successfully execute missions while under attack.

The wing's participation in Polar Force 19 ends April 5.

"Once the exercise has concluded," Slaten said, "We will take everything we've learned, figure out where our strengths and weaknesses are, and use that information to build an even stronger force."

The citizen-Airmen of the Alaska Air National Guard are Alaskans — we live here," Slaten added. "It's inspiring to see these highly trained, highly motivated men and women come together as a team to ensure that we are ready to respond when our nation calls."

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PHOTOS

DVIDS link <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/316723/alaska-air-national-guardsmen-show-readiness-deploy-worldwide>



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Tech. Sgt. Karen Peterson, noncommissioned officer in charge of command support staff with the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Logistics Readiness Squadron, checks the paperwork of a deployer as part of the Polar Force 19 exercise on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, April 2, 2019. Polar Force 19 was a readiness exercise designed to test the 176th Wing's ability to rapidly assemble and deploy an overwhelming combat force anywhere within the Indo-Pacific Theater of operations. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Louis Velasco)



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Tech. Sgt. Daniel Werth, assistant noncommissioned officer in charge of passenger service with the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Logistics Readiness Squadron, guides a forklift toward a scale used for weighing cargo as part of the Polar Force 19 exercise on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, April 2, 2019. Polar Force 19 was a readiness exercise designed to test the 176th Wing's ability to rapidly assemble and deploy an overwhelming combat force anywhere within the Indo-Pacific Theater of operations. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Louis Velasco)

